

Chapter 2: Planning Process

2 Documenting the Planning Process

Documentation of the planning process, including public involvement, is required to meet FEMA's DMA 2000 (44CFR§201.4(c)(1) and §201.6(c)(1)). This section includes a description of the planning process used to develop this plan, including how it was prepared, who was involved in the process, and how all of the involved agencies participated.

2.1 Description of the Planning Process

The Nez Perce County Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan was developed through a collaborative process involving all of the organizations and agencies detailed in Section 1.0 of this document. The County's local coordinator contacted these organizations directly to invite their participation and schedule meetings of the planning committee. The planning process included 5 distinct phases which were in some cases sequential (step 1 then step 2) and in some cases intermixed (step 4 completed though out the process):

1. **Collection of Data** about the extent and periodicity of wildfires in and around Nez Perce County. This included an area encompassing Latah, Clearwater, Idaho, and Lewis Counties to insure a robust dataset for making inferences about fires in Nez Perce County specifically; this included a wildfire extent and ignition profile.
2. **Field Observations and Estimations** about wildfire risks including fuels assessments, juxtaposition of structures and infrastructure to wildland fuels, access, and potential treatments by trained wildfire specialists.
3. **Mapping** of data relevant to wildfire control and treatments, structures, resource values, infrastructure, fire prone landscapes, and related data.
4. **Facilitation of Public Involvement** from the formation of the planning committee, to a public mail survey, news releases, public meetings, public review of draft documents, and acceptance of the final plan by the signatory representatives.
5. **Analysis and Drafting of the Report** to integrate the results of the planning process, providing ample review and integration of committee and public input, followed by acceptance of the final document.

Planning efforts were led by the Project Director, Dr. William E. Schlosser, of Northwest Management, Inc. Dr. Schlosser holds 4 degrees in natural resource management (A.S. geology; B.S. forest and range management; M.S. natural resource economic & finance; Ph.D. environmental science and regional planning). President of Northwest Management, Inc., Mr. Vincent Corrao, holds two degrees in natural resource management (A.S. forest management and B.S. forest resource management). Together, they led a team of resource professionals that included fire mitigation specialists, wildfire control specialists, resource management professionals, and hazard mitigation experts.

They were the point-people for team members to share data and information with during the plan's development. They and the planning team met with many residents of the county during the inspections of communities, infrastructure, and hazard abatement assessments. This methodology, when coupled with the other approaches in this process, worked effectively to integrate a wide spectrum of observations and interpretations about the project.

The planning philosophy employed in this project included the open and free sharing of information with interested parties. Information from federal and state agencies was integrated into the database of knowledge used in this project. Meetings with the committee were held throughout the planning process to facilitate a sharing of information between cooperators.

When the public meetings were held, many of the committee members were in attendance and shared their support and experiences with the planning process and their interpretations of the results.

2.2 Public Involvement

Public involvement in this plan was made a priority from the inception of the project. There were a number of ways that public involvement was sought and facilitated. In some cases this led to members of the public providing information and seeking an active role in protecting their own homes and businesses, while in other cases it led to the public becoming more aware of the process without becoming directly involved in the planning process.

2.2.1 News Releases

Under the auspices of the Nez Perce County Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Planning Committee, news releases were submitted to area newspapers.



Nez Perce County, Idaho Wildfire Mitigation Plan Public Meetings!



Lewiston: February 8, 2005, Lewiston Community Center, 1424 Main St., 7:00 – 9:00 pm.

Lapwai: February 9, 2005, Lapwai City Hall, 315 Main St., 7:00 – 9:00 pm.

Myrtle Beach: February 10, 2005, Fish & Game Building, Highway 12 between Arrow and Cherrylane, 7:00–9:00 pm.

These public meetings will address the **Wildfire Mitigation Plan** for our communities. These meetings are open to the public and will include slideshow presentations from hazard mitigation specialists working on the Nez Perce County Wildfire Mitigation Plan. Public input is being sought in order to better frame the County's efforts of hazard mitigation treatments, fire district resource enhancements, and public land management.

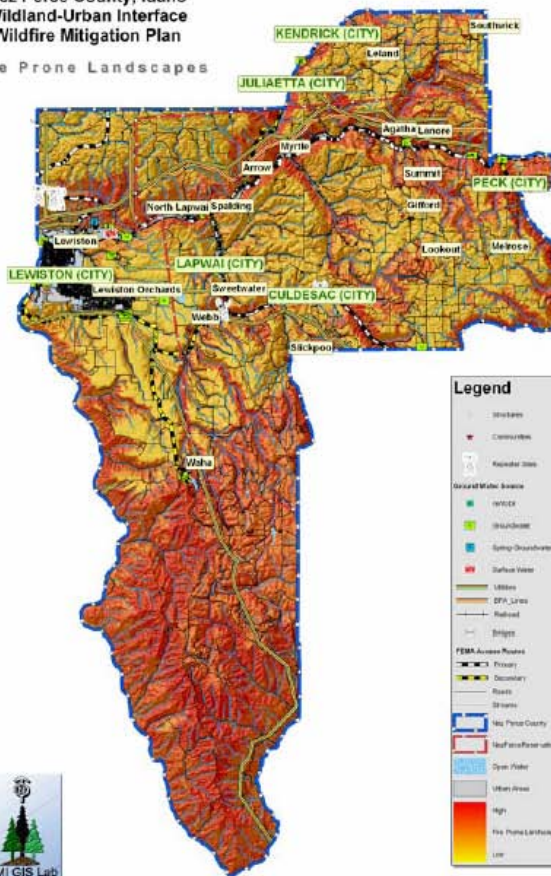
This meeting will last for approximately 1.5 hours.

Please attend and participate!



Nez Perce County, Idaho
Wildland-Urban Interface
Wildfire Mitigation Plan

Fire Prone Landscapes



Discuss **YOUR** priorities for how our communities can best mitigate these risks.

These meetings will last for approximately 1.5 hours and include refreshments, a slideshow, information on the planning process, and schedules for completion. **We want your input.**

Topics of discussion include:

- ◆ Wildfires
- ◆ Fire Fighting Resources
- ◆ Fire Districts
- ◆ Infrastructure
- ◆ Fuels Treatments

For more information on Hazard Mitigation Plan projects in Nez Perce County, contact your County Commissioners, Dan Pierce at the Clearwater RC&D office at 208-882-4960 ext. 4, or William E. Schlosser at the Northwest Management, Inc., office in Moscow at 208-883-4488.

We'll see you there!

2.2.1.1 Newspaper Articles

Committee and public meeting announcements were published in the Lewiston Morning Tribune ahead of each meeting. The following is an example of one of the newspaper announcements that ran in the local newspaper.

Nez Perce County Wildfire Mitigation Plan

Lewiston, ID --- The Nez Perce County Commissioners, have created a Wildfire Mitigation Plan Committee to complete a Wildfire Mitigation Plan for Nez Perce County. The Nez Perce County Wildfire Mitigation Plan will include risk analysis at the community level for wildfires that threaten our homes and communities. Northwest Management, Inc., a local firm, has been retained by the Clearwater Resource Conservation and Development Council, Inc., to provide risk assessments, mapping, field inspections, interviews, and to collaborate with the committee to prepare the plan.

The committee includes rural and wildland fire districts, land managers, elected officials, agency representatives, and others. Northwest Management specialists are conducting analyses of risk profiling and developing mitigation strategies. Specific mitigation activities for homes, structures, infrastructure, and resource capabilities will be proposed as part of the analysis.

The planning team will be conducting four public meetings to discuss preliminary findings and to seek public involvement in the planning process from February 8-10, 2005. For more information on the Wildfire Mitigation Plan project in Nez Perce County contact your County Commissioners, Dan Pierce at the Clearwater Resource Conservation and Development Council, Inc., office at 208-882-4960 ext. 4, or William E. Schlosser at the Northwest Management, Inc., office in Moscow at 208-883-4488.

Everyone interested in these meetings is encouraged to attend and join in the discussions!

Public Information Meetings:

Lewiston: February 8, 2005, Lewiston Community Center,
1424 Main St., 7:00 – 9:00 pm.

Lapwai: February 9, 2005, Lapwai City Hall,
315 Main St., 7:00 – 9:00 pm.

Myrtle Beach: February 10, 2005, Fish & Game Building
Highway 12 between Arrow and Cherrylane, 7:00 – 9:00 pm.

2.2.2 Public Mail Survey

In order to collect a broad base of perceptions about wildland fire and individual risk factors of homeowners in Nez Perce County, a mail survey was conducted. Using a state and county database of landowners in Nez Perce County, homeowners from the Wildland-Urban Interface surrounding each community were identified. In order to be included in the database, individuals were selected that own property and have a dwelling in Nez Perce County, as well as a mailing address in Nez Perce County. This database created a list of unique names to which a random number was affixed that contributed to the probability of being selected for the public mail survey. A total of 248 landowners meeting the above criteria were selected.

The public mail survey developed for this project has been used in the past by Northwest Management, Inc., during the execution of other WUI Wildfire Mitigation Plans. The survey used The Total Design Method (Dillman 1978) as a model to schedule the timing and content of letters sent to the selected recipients. Copies of each cover letter, mail survey, and communication are included in Appendix III.

The first in the series of mailing was sent October 19, 2004, and included a cover letter, a survey, and an offer of receiving a custom GIS map of the area of their selection in Nez Perce County if they would complete and return the survey. The free map incentive was tied into assisting their community and helping their interests by participating in this process. Each letter also informed residents about the planning process. A return self-addressed envelope was included in each packet. A postcard reminder was sent to the non-respondents on October 28, 2004, encouraging their response. A final mailing, with a revised cover letter pleading with them to participate, was sent to non-respondents on November 5, 2004.

Surveys were returned during the months of October, November, December, January, and February. A total of 91 residents responded to the survey (as of February 21, 2005 – this will be updated until the final plan is completed). The effective response rate for this survey was 37%. Statistically, this response rate allows the interpretation of all of the response variables significantly at the 95% confidence level.

2.2.2.1 Survey Results

A summary of the survey's results will be presented here and then referred back to during the ensuing discussions on the need for various treatments, education, and other information.

All of the respondents have a home in Nez Perce County, and 96% consider this their primary residence. About 16% of the respondents were from the Culdesac area, 15% were from the Lewiston area, 12% were from the Lenore area, 12% from Lapwai, 8% from Peck, 3% from Gifford, 3% from Southwick, 3% from Sweetwater, with the remainder were from Leland, Myrtle, and Cameron.

Almost all of the respondents (90%) correctly identified that they have emergency telephone 911 services in their area. However, their ability to correctly identify if they are covered by a rural fire district was less than hoped. Respondents were asked to identify if their home is protected by a rural or city fire district. Many of the county's residents have rural or city fire protection, with the exception of the homes in the areas of Waha, Southwick, Leland, Gifford, and the remote areas surrounding Lewiston, Culdesac, Lapwai, Peck, and the Clearwater River from the Big Canyon Fire District west to the Lapwai Rural Fire District. Of the respondents, 36% correctly identified they live in an area protected by a rural or city fire district. Approximately 24% responded they do not have a fire district covering their home, when in fact they do. None of the respondents indicated that they were within a fire protection district when in reality they are not.

Respondents were asked to indicate the type of roofing material covering the main structure of their home. Approximately 53% of respondents from rural areas indicated their homes were covered with a composite material (asphalt shingles). About 42% indicated their homes were covered with a metal (eg., aluminum, tin) roofing material. Roughly 5% of the respondents indicated they have a wooden roofing material such as shakes or shingles.

Residents were asked to evaluate the proximity of trees within certain distances of their homes. Often, the density of trees around a home is an indicator of increased fire risk. The results are presented in Table 2.1

Table 2.1 Survey responses indicating the proximity of trees to homes.

Number of Trees	Within 250 feet of your home	Within 75 feet of your home
None	42%	63%
Less than 10	31%	20%
Between 10 and 25	25%	10%
More than 25	0%	0%

Approximately 90% of those returning the survey indicated they have a lawn surrounding their home. Of these individual home sites, 86% indicated they keep this lawn green through the fire season. 29% of respondents indicated they have brush within 75 feet of their homes, while 2% said that this area was bare.

The average driveway length of the respondents from rural areas was approximately 673 feet long, from their main road to their parking area. Roughly 9% of these respondents had a driveway over ½ mile long, and a corresponding 19% had a driveway over ¼ of a mile long. Of these homes with lengthy driveways, roughly 23% have turnouts allowing two vehicles to pass each other in the case of an emergency. 80% of respondents' driveways have a gravel surface, while 7% are bare dirt. 4% of the total respondents have a steep driveway, requiring 4-wheel drive in slippery or icy conditions. Approximately 63% of all homeowners indicated they have an alternative escape route, with the remaining 37% indicating only one-way-in and one-way-out.

Nearly all respondents (98%) indicated they have some type of tools to use against a wildfire that threatens their home. Table 2.2 summarizes these responses.

Table 2.2. Percent of homes with indicated fire fighting tools in Nez Perce County.

97% – Hand tools (shovel, Pulaski, etc.)

25% – Portable water tank

19% – Stationery water tank

38% – Pond, lake, or stream water supply close

23% – Water pump and fire hose

19% – Equipment suitable for creating fire breaks (bulldozer, cat, skidder, etc.)

Roughly 21% of the respondents in Nez Perce County indicated they have someone in their household trained in wildland fire fighting. Approximately 12% indicated someone in the household had been trained in structural fire fighting. 73% indicated that someone in the household had First Aid training. However, it is important to note that these questions did not specify a standard nor did it refer to how long ago the training was received.

A couple of questions in the survey related to on-going fire mitigation efforts households may be implementing. Respondents were asked if they conduct a periodic fuels reduction program near their home sites, such as grass or brush burning. Approximately 69% of rural respondents answered affirmative to this question, while 41% responded that livestock (cattle, horses, sheep) graze the grasses and forbs around their home sites.

Respondents were asked to complete a fuel hazard rating worksheet to assess their home's fire risk rating. An additional column titled "results" has been added to the table, showing the percent of respondents circling each rating (Table 2.3).

Circle the ratings in each category that best describes your home.

Table 2.3. Fuel Hazard Rating Worksheet		Rating	Results
Fuel Hazard	Small, light fuels (grasses, forbs, weeds, shrubs)	1	65%
	Medium size fuels (brush, large shrubs, small trees)	2	30%
	Heavy, large fuels (woodlands, timber, heavy brush)	3	6%
Slope Hazard	Mild slopes (0-5%)	1	48%
	Moderate slope (6-20%)	2	33%
	Steep Slopes (21-40%)	3	16%
	Extreme slopes (41% and greater)	4	2%
Structure Hazard	Noncombustible roof and noncombustible siding materials	1	37%
	Noncombustible roof and combustible siding material	3	33%
	Combustible roof and noncombustible siding material	7	8%
	Combustible roof and combustible siding materials	10	22%
Additional Factors	Rough topography that contains several steep canyons or ridges	+2	Average -0.7 pts
	Areas having history of higher than average fire occurrence	+3	
	Areas exposed to severe fire weather and strong winds	+4	
	Areas with existing fuel modifications or usable fire breaks	-3	
	Areas with local facilities (water systems, rural fire districts, dozers)	-3	

Calculating your risk

Values below are the average response value to each question.

$$\begin{array}{rcl}
 \text{Fuel hazard} & \underline{1.4} & \times \text{Slope Hazard } \underline{1.7} = \underline{2.4} \\
 \text{Structural hazard} & + & \underline{4.1} \\
 \text{Additional factors (+ or -)} & & \underline{-0.7} \\
 \text{Total Hazard Points} & = & \underline{5.78}
 \end{array}$$

Table 2.4. Percent of respondents in each risk category as determined by the survey respondents.

01% – Extreme Risk = 26 + points
05% – High Risk = 16–25 points
34% – Moderate Risk = 6–15 points
59% – Low Risk = 6 or less points

Values below are the average response value to each question for those living in **rural** areas only.

Values below are the average response value to each question for those living in **urban** areas only.

$$\begin{array}{rcl}
 \text{Fuel hazard } \underline{1.4} & \times \text{ Slope Hazard } \underline{1.8} & = \underline{2.5} \\
 \text{Structural hazard} & + & \underline{4.0} \\
 \text{Additional factors (+ or -)} & & \underline{-0.4} \\
 \text{Total Hazard Points} & = & \underline{6.1}
 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{rcl}
 \text{Fuel hazard } \underline{1.6} & \times \text{ Slope Hazard } \underline{1.3} & = \underline{2.1} \\
 \text{Structural hazard} & + & \underline{4.5} \\
 \text{Additional factors (+ or -)} & & \underline{-2.0} \\
 \text{Total Hazard Points} & = & \underline{4.6}
 \end{array}$$

Table 2.5. Percent of respondents in each risk category as determined by the survey respondents.

01% – Extreme Risk = 26 + points
 07% – High Risk = 16–25 points
 34% – Moderate Risk = 7–15 points
 58% – Low Risk = 6 or less points

Table 2.6. Percent of respondents in each risk category as determined by the survey respondents.

00% – Extreme Risk = 26 + points
 00% – High Risk = 16–25 points
 31% – Moderate Risk = 7–15 points
 69% – Low Risk = 6 or less points

Maximum household rating form score was 26 points, as assessed by the homeowners. These numbers were compared to observations made by field crews trained in wildland fire fighting. These results indicate that for the most part, these indications are only slightly lower than the risk rating assigned by the “professionals”. Anecdotal evidence would indicate that Nez Perce County landowners involved in this survey have a more realistic view of wildfire risk than the landowners in other Idaho counties where these questions have been asked.

Finally, respondents were asked “if offered in your area, would members of your household attend a free, or low cost, one-day training seminar designed to teach homeowners in the wildland–urban interface how to improve the defensible space surrounding your home and adjacent outbuildings?” A majority of the respondents, 53% indicated a desire to participate in this type of training.

Homeowners were also asked, “How do you feel Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Mitigation projects should be funded in the areas surrounding homes, communities, and infrastructure such as power lines and major roads?” Responses are summarized in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7. Public Opinion of Wildfire Mitigation Funding Preferences.

	Mark the box that best applies to your preference		
	100% Public Funding	Cost-Share (Public & Private)	Privately Funded (Owner or Company)
Home Defensibility Projects	14%	37%	37%
Community Defensibility Projects	45%	34%	10%
Infrastructure Projects Roads, Bridges, Power Lines, Etc.	63%	12%	12%

2.2.3 Committee Meetings

The following list of people who participated in the planning committee meetings, volunteered time, or responded to elements of the Nez Perce County Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan’s preparation.

- Tom Richards.....Northwest Management, Inc.
- Betty Clark.....Nez Perce County Planning
- Bill ReynoldsNez Perce County GIS
- Bill Maison.....Clearwater Emergency Services

- Chuck Doty.....Clearwater RC&D
- Dan PierceClearwater RC&D
- Debbie RuppeBureau of Homeland Security
- Dick Hodge.....Clearwater RC&D
- Howard Weeks.....Clearwater-Potlatch Timber Protection Association
- John WillardSunnyside Rural Fire Department
- Laura BarrettUSDA Forest Service
- Mark Craig.....Bureau of Land Management
- Mel Johnson.....Nez Perce County Sheriffs Office
- Randy Kingsbury.....Nez Perce County Sheriffs Office
- Ron WittmanNez Perce County Commissioner
- Rusty EckClearwater-Potlatch Timber Protection Association
- Tami ParkinsonUSDA Forest Service
- Tom McWilliams.....USDA Forest Service
- John DeGroot.....Nez Perce Tribe
- Sandy Holt.....Nez Perce Tribe
- Roger KechterIdaho Department of Lands
- Thom HawkinsIdaho Department of Lands

Committee Meetings were scheduled and held on the following dates:

2.2.3.1 September 29th, 2004 – Brammer Building

Meeting began at approximately 9:00 AM. (Attendance list attached)

The meeting was well attended by Nez Perce County Commissioners, NPC Emergency Management, NPC GIS Dept., NPC Planning, NPC Sheriff, USFS, Clearwater RC&D, Bureau of Land Management and Northwest Management, Inc.

Meeting Minutes

Meeting welcome by Toby Brown and Tom Richards of Northwest Management, Inc.

Overview of the Fire Mitigation Plan Process

Toby Brown presented slide show of FMP planning process for a FEMA Compliant plan. Discussed how this plan is an update of the previous plan completed by the RC&D and that the final product will be National Fire Plan and FEMA compatible. Previous plan did not have the public input and involvement component. There were no guidelines for an FMP when the original plan was completed. It was noted that Nez Perce Tribe and the Idaho Department of Lands were both absent from the meeting. It was suggested that both the Lands Manager from the Tribe, John Degroot, as well as the NPT RFD Fire Chief , Sandy Holt, be invited to attend these committee meetings. Roger Kechter and Thom Hawkins were identified as representatives from the IDL that should be present to provide input. Tom Richards will follow up on inviting these folks to the next meeting. There was some discussion on the opportunities

of setting up Rural Fire Districts in Nez Perce County. Currently the Sheriff's office is responding to structural fires in the areas not currently w/in the bounds of an RFD. There is also a fire protection subscription service available within the county. Sheriff Kingsbury would like to know if his office can get equipment through the implementation of this plan. Does it provide an avenue for funding or grants? Federal Gov't granting and funding agencies need an organization (county or other) in place to deal with. Creation of new RFD's is a big issue in the county and needs to be addressed. Usually the creation of fire district fails due to the increased tax issue. Creation of a district needs to start at the grassroots level. Mel Johnson will get a copy of the Nez Perce County All Hazards Mitigation Plan to Northwest Management, Inc. Also Betty Clack will get a copy of the County Comprehensive Plan to NMI. Sheriff Kingsbury will provide maps of the available water spots within the county.

Media-Release—Sample

Handed out sample copy of the media release to be sent to the local newspapers. The Lewiston Morning Tribune, Clearwater Tribune, Money Saver and the Nez Perce Tribal paper were identified as the news papers that the Media Release will be sent to. Changes within the Media Release - release should originate from the Commissioners office, add the Commissioners phone number and address to the letterhead. Tom Richards will e-mail the Press Release to Ron Wittman and he will run it by the other Commissioners and send the release out.

Public Mail Survey

Handed out and review the Survey that will be sent to approximately 200 to 250 rural Nez Perce County residents. Committee asked to review and critique.

Additional Questions/Comments:

- Reubens area has no 911.
- Add "shrubs" to question #8.
- Question #11—Add question referring to how wide their driveway is, i.e. 6'-10', 12'-16', 18'+.
- Add question on whether their private lane services more than one residence.
- Define steepness of road—easily accessed by 2 wheel drive vehicle year-round, accessible only by 4-wheel drive.—add this question
- Add question on overhead clearance—archways or trees.
- Add question—Do residents know when burning seasons are—in the state of Idaho and Nez Perce County.
- Stress that this is a confidential survey. Bold the Confidentiality Statement in the letter.

Community Assessments

Handed out draft community assessments for communities that were identified by the federal government as communities at risk from wildfire.

Changes to the Draft Assessments

- Should do Peck/Big Canyon as a separate assessment.
- Divide the Clearwater Canyon into upper and lower at the Arrow Bridge. Assess northern and southern sides of the canyon separately. Will end up with Upper-Northern, Upper-southern, Lower-northern and Lower-southern.
- Add Lapwai/Sweetwater corridor
- Add Leland/Southwick area
- Add Gifford area
- Lump Soldiers Meadows area with the Waha. Refer to Craig Mountain as Waha.

Fire Protection Districts

Wildland fire protection—Check with Thom Hawkins of the IDL on the specifics of the IDL's protection boundaries. Does it actually go to Tammany Creek? Some of rural areas outside RFD protection districts are covered by Subscription—Sunnyside RFD protects some residences in the eastern portion of NPC. Genesee RFD—Betty Clack will provide a legal description of the boundary of this RFD. Changes on Fire Protection Districts Map - Culdesac and Lapwai Fire departments will respond to a 10 mile radius circle around those towns (Do not want to portray this on the map.) Plan needs to address the fire protection provided by the Sheriffs Office. Additional RFD's, funding??? Contact NP Tribe about the Legal Fire Protection that it provides - they have a contract with IDL to provide protection on Tribal owned lands (Trust Lands). Does it extend further than this? NMI will contact Tribe to clarify this. Potlatch Corp. - City of Lewiston will respond to fire w/in the Potlatch facility. Potlatch will not go outside of their ground to fight fire.

Infrastructure—Roads, Railroads, gas lines, etc.

- Identify primary and secondary roads
- Primary Roads—High traffic, Arterials
- Secondary--??, Collector Roads
- Will use the NPC Comprehensive Plan , Transportation Plan definition of Primary and Secondary roads—NPC will be coming out with a new map identifying these roads. Betty Clack will provide a copy to NMI.
- Radio Repeaters—Idaho State Interoperable Radio Commission. This commission is assessing Statewide radio communication. They are in the data collection phase at this time. NMI will check with Debbie Root? Repeater Sites - marked on map
- Teaken Butte
- Sanders
- Cottonwood Butte
- Culdesac
- Winchester - outside the county
- Lewiston Hill

Resource and Capabilities Assessments

Need to be updated by RFD's - Genesee RFD #2, IDL, both Ponderosa and Craig Mountain. Need to has an assessment for Big Canyon FD Exclude from the plan.

- City of Lewiston
- Potlatch Corp.
- Clearwater Power Co.
- Clearwater Fire Services—No mutual aid agreement, not recognized by the county at this time. Need to include
- Nez Perce Tribe Fire Department

Schedule of Committee and Public Meetings

Next meeting Scheduled tentatively for November 16. 1:00 PM.

2.2.3.2 November 18th, 2004 – Brammer Building

Meeting began at approximately 9:00 AM. The meeting was well attended by Nez Perce County Commissioners, NPC Emergency Management, NPC GIS Dept., NPC Planning, NPC Sheriff, USFS, Clearwater RC&D, Bureau of Land Management and Northwest Management, Inc.

Meeting Minutes

Meeting welcome by Bill Schlosser and Tom Richards of Northwest Management, Inc. Bill Schlosser recapped the FMP process and noted changes that needed to be made to Kendrick/Juliaetta WUI.

Next Meetings—Tentative Dates

Public Meetings—Week of January 23, 2005
Committee Meeting—Jan. 18, 2005
Committee Meeting—Feb. 15, 2005
Committee Meeting—Plan Review—March 1, 2005
Plan Public Review—March 8, 2005
All Plan Comments Due by March 22, 2005

Infrastructure Discussion

IDL indicated that they have placed a repeater in Hells Canyon on the Oregon side of the River. They will send NMI the Lat and Long so they can be placed on map.

Roads—Primary—Take from NPC Transportation Plan. Secondary—Link to primaries

Need to plan mitigation activities along primary and secondary roads so they can be kept open during emergencies.—Fuels treatments, also potential for future funding for maintenance

Identify the road classes for:

Evacuation Routes

Maintain access throughout county

Critical Road for upgrading—Zaza road in the Craig Mtn. area, needs widening. Have increased recreation use in area.

Bridges—Bridge rating is contained in the GIS layer that has been provided to NMI from NPC.

Community Assessments

Have been sent out for review. Waiting for comments.

Resources and Capabilities

Fire Protection Districts:

IDL—Craig Mtn. to Tammany Creek Road to Webb Ridge Road.

NPC Sheriff—Responds to fires within county where little or not Rural Districts.

RFD's—Recommended that several RFD's be created within the county. Around Lewiston, Waha area, Clearwater River Corridor. Areas that new housing has been occurring.

WUI Treatments

IDL—Framing Our Community Program—Waha Area—Charlie Grubb responsible for project. Recommend creation of Fuel break around the Waha area. Also home defensible space assistance available through the IDL. Need to get past and planned treatments from the IDL, BLM and NPT for inclusion into plan.

Policy—Recommend a permanent County fire committee to carry out Fire Mitigation Plan. One person could also cover Clearwater and Lewis Counties.

2.2.3.3 January 21, 2005 – Brammer Building

Meeting began at approximately 9:00 AM. The meeting was well attended by Nez Perce County Commissioners, NPC Emergency Management, NPC GIS Dept., NPC Planning, NPC Sheriff, USFS, Clearwater RC&D, Bureau of Land Management and Northwest Management, Inc.

Meeting Minutes

Meeting welcome by Bill Schlosser and Tom Richards of Northwest Management, Inc.

Fire Districts—New or Needed

Nez Perce Tribe Rural Fire District

Should be resolved by the start of fire season—will cover wildland fire, not structure protection. Charlie Grubb gave us a copy of the Tribe protection boundary. Should show these maps at the public meetings. Need to note that the IDL is not downgrading or reducing its resources.

Waha—Need to create an RFD in this area.

Big Canyon FD—Considering a new district in the Myrtle/Lenore area. Randy Moss of Big

Canyon has information and district boundaries for this new district.

Kendrick/Julietta—Expansion Proposed—Will be voted on at March 24 meeting.

Lapawai/Sweetwater—Need new one

Culdesac Area

Cougar Ridge—Lewiston area

Public Survey Update—have a 40% response rate in NP County out of a total of 225 surveys. 80% of

surveys went to rural residents.

Enhancements to RFD's and specific treatments—What needs to happen in the county?

Bridges/Roads—All needs are covered in the NPC Transportation Plan which should be tiered to FMP

Policy—FMP should support and endorse the County Transportation Plan.—need to have roads built to meet standards for Emergency Equip. access.

Water Development

Waha Lake area—IDL to install ponds in area, looking for sites. Will use Equip Money to build ponds. Also need above ground tanks for filling of structural engines.

A goal for ponds would be to have a dip pond every 10 miles. Currently have 50 within district. Need 3 to 4 within NP Co.

Above ground tank needs:

Need 4 in Soldiers Meadows to Waha Area

Need 3-4 in Lenore area

Melrose area—No access to river, have a hydrant in Peck. Could use additional

above ground tanks.

River Tanks—need up to 10 tanks near population centers and on ridges.

Treatment areas—Potential Treatment areas

Waha
Soldiers Meadows
Forest
Lenore area
Clearwater Corridor
Peck
Kendrick/Julietta

Fuels treatments in grass areas. Star-thistle. IDL views as a hazardous fuel type. Insect depredation in conjunction with grass seeding appears to be having an impact on star thistle. Biggest problem with this fuel type in Lapwai and Culdesac areas.

Education—Appears to big need in NP Co. Who will do the education? RC&D, SCA, NP Co., Masters Gardeners?

Hazardous Fuels Co-ordinator—Appears to be a long way down the road for this county. Will be recommended within the plan. Would implement a Firewise type of program. Could share with surrounding counties.

2.2.4 Public Meetings

Public meetings were held during the planning process, as an integral component to the planning process. It was the desire of the planning committee, and the Nez Perce County Commissioners to integrate the public's input to the development of the fire mitigation plan.

Formal public meetings were scheduled on February 8, 2005, at Lewiston, Idaho, on February 9, 2005, at Lapwai, Idaho, and on February 10, 2005, at Myrtle, Idaho. The purpose of these meetings was to share information on the planning process with a broadly representative cross section of Nez Perce County landowners. Both meetings had wall maps posted in the meeting rooms with many of the analysis results summarized specifically for the risk assessments, location of structures, fire protection, and related information. The formal portion of the presentations included a PowerPoint presentation made by Project Director, Dr. William E. Schlosser. During his presentations, comments from committee members, fire chiefs, and others were encouraged in an effort to engage the audience in a discussion.

It was made clear to all in attendance that their input was welcome and encouraged, as specific treatments had not yet been decided, nor had the risk assessment been completed. Attendees were told that they could provide oral comment during these meetings, they could provide written comment to the meetings, or they could request more information in person to discuss the plan. In addition, attendees were told they would have an opportunity to review the draft plan prior to its completion to further facilitate their comments and input.

The formal presentations lasted approximately 1 hour and included many questions and comments from the audience. Following the meetings, many discussions continued with the committee members and the general public discussing specific areas, potential treatments, the risk analysis, and other topics.

The following are comments, questions or suggestions from the meetings:

2.2.4.1 Lewiston Public Meeting

February 8, 2005 – Lewiston Community Center

Introduction of the Fire Mitigation Planning process by Bill Schlosser. He covered the development of fire risk analysis, WUI development, etc. During and following the presentation there was informal discussion on Fire Mitigation Planning.

The Nez Perce County Sheriff will no longer respond to wildland fire in the areas not covered by a rural fire district within the County. The new sheriff wants his deputies to concentrate on law enforcement and not on fire fighting. As a consequence, the County Commissioners have formed a Fire Chief/Coordinator position to facilitate the education and coordination of volunteer wildland fire suppression and to respond to vehicle fires within areas not covered by fire districts.

The goals of the new county fire program are:

- Education
- Push IDL defensible space program
- Secure grants for firefighting equipment
- Help to set up Rural Fire Districts

The Nez Perce Tribe will also be responsible for responding to wildland fires in an area to the north of the IDL protection area and within the reservation boundary. Again they will respond primarily to wildland fire and not structural. NPT will have jurisdiction over the fires within this area and other agencies will be co-operators through MOU's.

This still leaves a large area of the county not covered by Rural Fire Protection (structural protection). This is probably one of the primary needs for the County—Creation and expansion of the Rural Fire Districts.

Some of the area un-protected by Rural Fire Districts is covered by subscription based fire protection. There are approximately 300 homes protected by these entities.

New RFD's needed in the following areas:

- Waha
- Clearwater River Corridor

People must take the responsibility to protect themselves. Most of the new residents are anti-district or they believe that they are covered by some sort of fire protection.

Defensible Space

IDL offered a defensible space program for free at no cost in the Waha Glen to 100 homes, only 4 took the offer. Education is needed to show people the benefits of this type of program.

Mitigation Ideas

- Creation of RFD's
- Continuation of the defensible space program as per the IDL.
- Creation of County level fire mitigation coordinator for NP County.
- Integration of protection and mitigation treatments
- Education
 - Education on defensible space

- RFD creation—Show people the savings in insurance costs if they are within an fire protection district. Move from 10 to 9 rating—18% savings in insurance costs. Move from 10 to 7—49%

Should have a 5 to 10 year plan to treat 50% of the homes in the Waha area.

2.2.4.2 Lapwai Public Meeting

February 9, 2005 – Lapwai City Hall

The Nez Perce Tribe will respond within the Reservation boundary, but not outside the boundary unless requested by the State under their mutual agreement. The Tribe and the State have recently established new boundaries for protection between the Reservation and the County wildlands.

The Waha area southeast of Lewiston is considered by most of the fire personnel to be the most critical WUI area. The home owners have been notified to enter into mitigation activities provided by the IDL, but only a few landowners have taken the opportunity.

Some of the areas within the County that are not covered by a rural fire district are under a subscription fire protection contract with a local fire company. The company covers approximately ten miles outside the rural fire district and presently has approximately 300 plus home under contract. This contractor stated that they are rated to 10 miles outside of Lewiston. The landowners that have entered in the subscription service have received significant reduction in their home insurance cost as stated by the contractor.

In the Waha area tanks and water sources need to be established to shorten turn around times and increase fire fighting efficiency.

The Sheriff department will no longer provide fire fighting services as they have in the past and the County is considering a rural wildland district to address the area that was covered by the sheriff's office in the past. The equipment will be passed to the new district.

Most of the attendee's also had attended the meeting in Lewiston the previous evening and the issues for the most part appeared to be very similar in nature from the earlier meeting.

2.2.4.3 Lenore Public Meeting

February 10, 2005 – Nez Perce Tribal Fish Hatchery

Meeting moved from the Idaho Fish and Game building at Myrtle to the Nez Perce Tribal Fish Hatchery at Lenore/Cherry Lane.

Bill provided an intro and background to the fire mitigation planning process. Gave the people in attendance a progress report on where the report development is at now. A free flowing discussion followed Bill's introduction.

As indicated in the other meetings with in the county, RFD's appear to be the biggest need in regards to fire mitigation within NP county.

Ron Wittman, NP County Commissioner outlined the proposed new County fire department(?).

Sheriff's Dept. will no longer respond to wildfire as firefighters within the county. The county plans to for an initial response unit to fight highway and wildfires within the unprotected areas of the county. Wildland fires are primary focus, not structural fires. They have hire a fire response coordinator for the county. Long term goals of the fire department include

- Creation of countywide fire protection district
- Structural protection district is also long term goal—county will take the responsibility to push this forward through education.
- Education on fire mitigation treatments
- Push the IDL fire mitigation program within the county
- Secure grants

New fire district proposed:

A new fire district has been proposed along the Clearwater River in NP County. It will run from the Sunnyside district boundary in the east to Myrtle. They will not force people to belong to the district, they are mapping the area now to include only those people who wish to be included within the district. Land has been donated at both ends of the proposed district for locating fire stations.

Other Needs

- Countywide dispatch—difficult for upriver districts to get the county to dispatch other emergency personnel to them.
- Communications—especially Big Canyon Fire district—They cannot communicate with themselves let alone anyone outside their district. Need radios, pagers, repeaters.
- Structures and equipment for new fire district along Clearwater River. Structural grants.
- State of Idaho should enforce the ISO ratings so the insurance companies will abide by it and not sell insurance to those outside of fire districts.
- Create education packet on how to form a fire district or re-organize a current protection district.
- Fuels Mitigation program in Waha, Clearwater River corridor and Potlatch River Corridor.

2.2.4.4 Public meeting slide show

Figure 2.1. Nez Perce County Public Meeting Slide Show.



The public meeting slide show (title slide above) is outlined below.

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Slide 2

Slide 3

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Slide 9

Wildfire Mitigation: National Policy

- **National Fire Plan (2000)**
 - Preparedness
 - Rehabilitation & Restoration
 - Hazardous Fuel Reduction
 - Community Protection
 - Accountability
- **Statewide Implementation Strategy**
 - Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security
 - Idaho Implementation Strategy of the National Fire Plan

Slide 10

Healthy Forests Restoration Act

- Strengthens public participation in developing high priority projects;
- Reduces the complexity of environmental analysis allowing federal land agencies to use the best science available to actively manage land under their protection;
- Creates a pre-decisional objections process encouraging early public participation in project planning; and
- Issues clear guidance for court action challenging HFRA projects.

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Funding Opportunities

- **Federal Monies**
 - National Fire Plan
 - Healthy Forests Restoration Act
 - Federal Emergency Management Agency
- **State Monies**
 - Statewide Implementation Efforts
 - Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security
- **The Goal is Hazard Reduction**
 - Protection of People and Structures
 - Protection of Infrastructure
 - Protection of Economy
 - Protection of Ecosystems

Slide 12

Recommendations

- WUI Safety & Policy
- People & Structures
- Infrastructure
- Resources & Capabilities
- Regional Land Management Recommendations

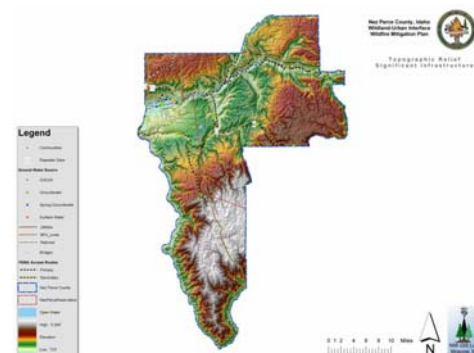
We will revisit this list at the end of the presentation...

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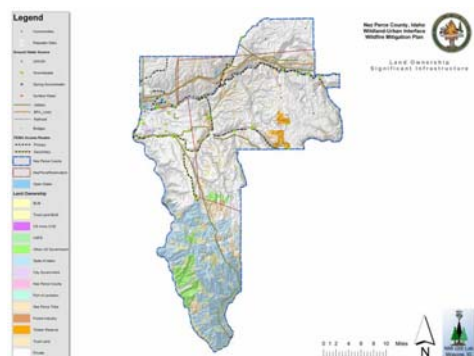
Hazard Mitigation Approach

- Hazard Profile
- Risk Assessment
- Vulnerability Appraisal
- Mitigation Strategy Development
- Prioritization and Planning
- Implement the Plan!

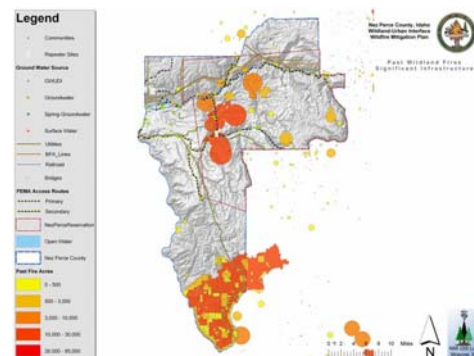
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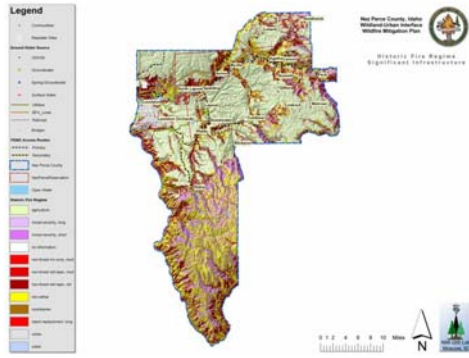
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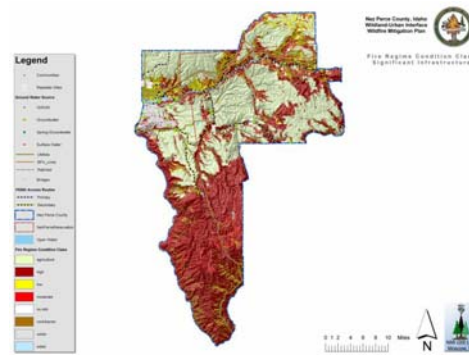
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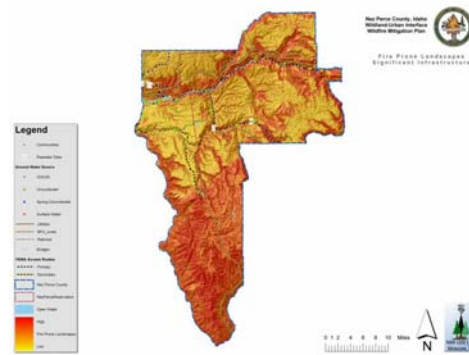
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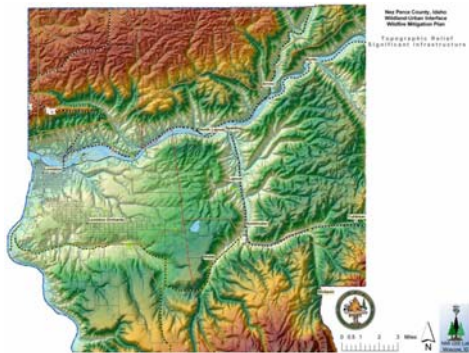
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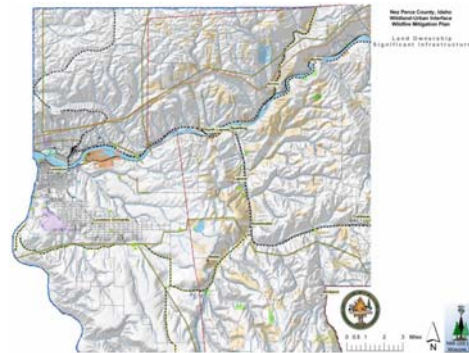
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Slide 21



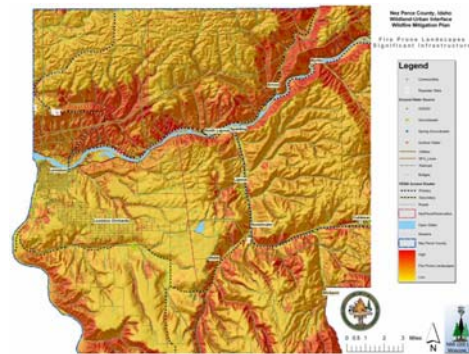
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Wildland-Urban Interface

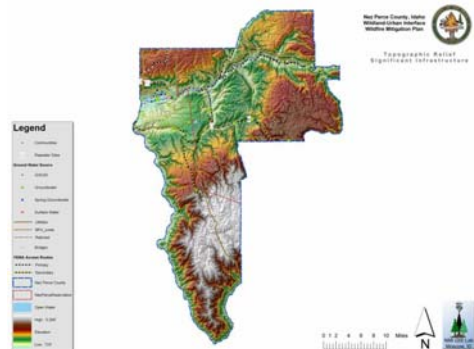
- Interface Condition** – a situation where structures abut wildland fuels. There is a clear line of demarcation between the structures and the wildland fuels along roads or back fences. The development density for an interface condition is usually 3+ structures per acre;
- Intermix Condition** – a situation where structures are scattered throughout a wildland area. There is no clear line of demarcation, the wildland fuels are continuous outside of and within the developed area. The development density in the intermix ranges from structures very close together to one structure per 40 acres;
- Occluded Condition** – a situation, normally within a city, where structures abut an island of wildland fuels (park or open space). There is a clear line of demarcation between the structures and the wildland fuels along roads and fences. The development density for an occluded condition is usually similar to that found in the interface condition and the occluded area is usually less than 1,000 acres in size; and
- Rural Condition** – a situation where the scattered small clusters of structures (ranches, farms, resorts, or summer cabins) are exposed to wildland fuels. There may be miles between these clusters.

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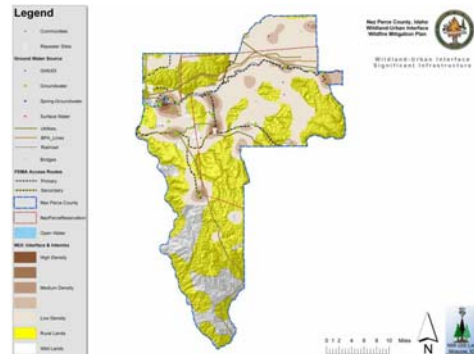
Defining Nez Perce County's Wildland-Urban Interface

- Unique to each area & it changes over time
- Based on where structures are currently located
- Uses mathematical formulae and geospatial relationships to visually represent where the WUI exists
- *When you see it, you'll understand what we mean*

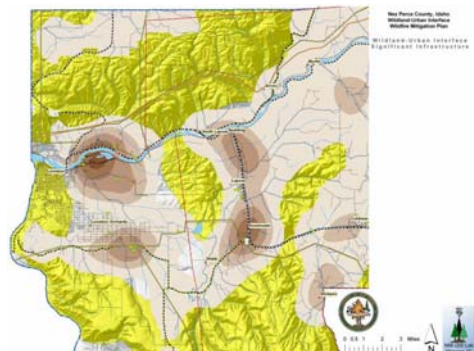
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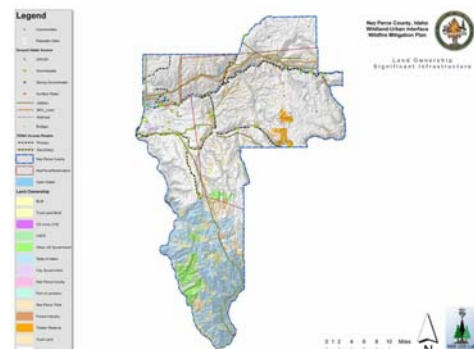


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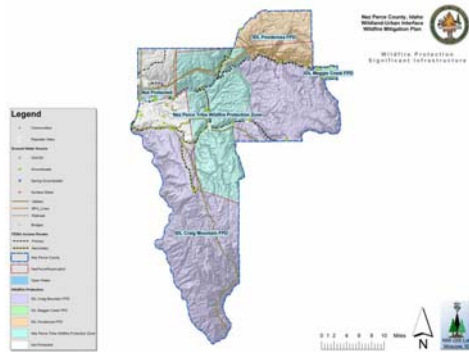
Preparedness

- City Fire Protection
- Rural Fire Protection
- Wildland Fire Protection

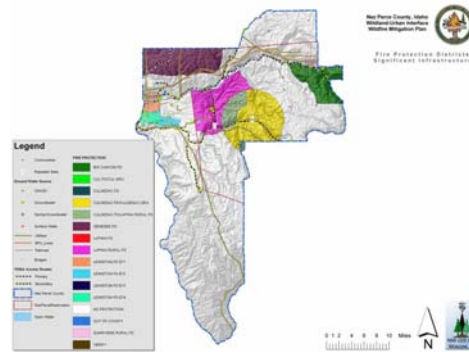
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Public Involvement

- Public Mail Survey sent a random sample of households in Nez Perce County
 - Mailed in October – December, 248 total households, 36% return rate (2 - 5% is national average)
- Three Public Meetings will be held this week
- Public Review of Draft Documents

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Written Plan Completion

- Committee will review the draft document first
- Public Review of the Draft document is next
- The final document will be presented for acceptance by the County Commissioners and others

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Recommendations

- WUI Safety & Policy
- People & Structures
- Infrastructure
- Resources & Capabilities
- Regional Land Management Recommendations

Are we accomplishing these goals?

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2.3 Review of the WUI Wildfire Mitigation Plan

Review of sections of this document was conducted by the planning committee during the planning process as maps, summaries, and written assessments were completed. These individuals included fire mitigation specialists, fire fighters, planners, elected officials, and others involved in the coordination process. Preliminary findings were discussed at the public meetings, where comments were collected and facilitated.

The results of these formal and informal reviews were integrated into a DRAFT Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan. This plan was given to members of the planning committee on February 22, 2005.

Public review of the plan was open from March 14 – March 25, 2005. Press releases announced its availability and copies were available for editing with comments sent to Dr. Schlosser, Northwest Management, Inc.